



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ה שבט תשע"ח – משפטים – 10th February 2018 - Volume 10 - Issue 29

News This Week

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davening in honour of Shabbos Mevorchin. It is not yet sponsored, if you would like to sponsor it please contact Avi Stern

Learn for Josh

Sunday 11th February, between 9.30am - 12.30pm in Ohr Yerushalayim.

Everyone in the Kehilla is invited to participate. Learn alone or with a Chavrusa for at least 1½ hours as a זכות for a רפואה שלמה for אלימלך יהושע אהרון בן דברה רבקה.

May תפילות answer our heartfelt הקב"ה.

Growth Investment

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

In a portion replete with commands and laws that detail hundreds of the most diverse aspects of Jewish life, our sages look carefully at the juxtapositions of those commands, garnering even more wisdom and moral guidance from the holy words of the Torah.

That is why they explicated the very interesting placement of two commands that seem as diverse as ends of the spectrum. One verse tells us about the laws of a treifah animal, "People of holiness shall you be to Me; you shall not eat flesh of an animal that was torn in the field; to the dog shall you throw it" (Exodus 22:30). The next verse tells us about carrying a false or evil reports, "Do not accept a false report, do not extend your hand with the wicked to be a venal witness" (Exodus 23:1).

The two seem quite disjointed; yet the Talmud in Pesachim 118 quotes Rav Shaishes in the name of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah who connects the two. "Whoever speaks or accepts gossip (lashon horah) is worthy to be thrown to the dogs, as it is written 'to the dog shall you throw it' and immediately afterwards it is written, 'do not accept a false report.'"

At first the connection, albeit homiletic, is difficult to understand. What does throwing non-kosher meat to a dog have to do with a gossip? The two seem totally unconnected. According to the Mechilta, the meat given to the dogs is a payback for their reticence on the night of the Egyptian exodus. That night, despite the cries and wails of the Egyptians as their first-born were smitten, the dogs were still. "Against all the Children of Israel, no dog shall whet its tongue, against neither man nor beast, so that you shall know that Hashem will have differentiated between Egypt and Israel" (Exodus 11:7). Therefore they are rewarded with the meat that a Jew must refrain from eating. How is their reward of reticence a lesson for Jews who slander?

I recently read of a man who was going on vacation to one of the islands south of the United States. He wanted a room for himself and his pet dog, and asked if the establishment, a hotel in Kingston, Jamaica, would allow an animal. A few weeks later he received his reply:

Dear Sir,
I've been in the hotel business for forty years and never had to eject a disorderly dog. Never has a dog set a mattress on fire while smoking in bed. Never has a dog stolen a towel or sneaked an unpaid guest

לעלו נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

Kiddush Bemokom Seuda

וקראת לשבת עונג (ישעיה נ"ח י"ג)

We learn from this Posuk that after making Kiddush one must eat "immediately" in that place. This applies both on Friday night and Shabbos day.

One who makes Kiddush and does not eat a "meal" in the "same" place, even if he eats a meal elsewhere, has not discharged his obligation to make Kiddush, and must make Kiddush again before eating anything else.

the terms "immediately", "same place" and "meal" will be elaborated in future issues בס"ד.

into his room. Never has a dog acted disorderly, drunk or otherwise. Your dog is welcome. If he can vouch for you, you can come along as well.

Thank You

The Chafetz Chaim explains that the Talmud is making an amazingly profound comparison. The reason dogs were rewarded was because their nature is to yelp and bark at tragedy. Despite their instinct, they went against their nature and held back. They followed the command of the Almighty and held their tongues. The Torah rewarded their reserve with the spoils of our control treif meat.

But when humans, who are supposed to control their desires and their tongues, lose control, there is no better method to learn how to mend the folly of their ways than through the very animals who mastered self-control in most trying times.

How fitting is it that the two verses, one that rewards the canine for constraint be juxtaposed next to one which upbraids their mortal masters who unfortunately lose perspective all too often. We are the masters of our animals, but more so must be the masters of our desires! Often, however, when our dogs get their just rewards it is not

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת משפטים

Candle Lighting	4.52pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.57pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.00am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	4.11pm
2nd Mincha	4.41pm
Shalosh Seudas	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	6.01pm
Ovos uBonim	7.01pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs / Fri ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	5.00pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

פרשת שקלים, מברכין אדר

only time for us to appreciate their constraint. Instead of just teaching our dogs new tricks, we can learn a lesson as well.

Gilded Bondage

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

This is where it was all leading. The miraculous ten plagues. The triumphant Exodus from Egypt. The incredible parting of the sea. The spectacular revelation of the Divine Presence on Mount Sinai. The declaration of the Ten Commandments. Everything was pointing toward the acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish people. And now it had all come to pass. It was time to get down to the business of learning what the vast Torah was all about.

So what were the first laws Moses taught the Jewish people in the desert encampments? Did they describe the observance of the Sabbath day? The celebration of the festivals? The guidelines for kosher food? Not at all. Moses begins by telling the people about a Jewish thief who is sold into bondage in a Jewish home for six years so that his victim can be repaid. What is so critical about these laws that they are given such high priority?

Let us take a closer look at this Jewish bondsman. What if after six years, when his term of bondage expires, he decides to stay on? After all, the Torah instructs the Jewish master to share all the comforts of home with his Jewish bondsman. What if the bondsman finds this situation secure and pleasant and doesn't want to leave? The Torah tells us he must be brought to the doorpost. Then his ear, which heard Hashem say, "The Jewish people are My servants," not servants of servants, must be drilled through with an awl.

Why does the Torah prescribe such a harsh punishment for this bondsman who chooses to remain in his master's house?

The commentators explain that the attitude of the bondsman who chooses to remain in his master's house is antithetical to the very essence of the Exodus from Egypt. Clearly, he views the redemption from Egyptian bondage in purely physical terms. In Egypt, the Jewish people suffered material privation and dreadful working conditions, but now they could enjoy the fruits of their own labor and live in relative comfort. If the Jewish master's house provided material comfort and security, then it was perfectly acceptable to live in this sort of gilded bondage.

But that was not the primary purpose of the Exodus. Hashem had not wrenched them free from the grasp of the Egyptians simply to give them the creature comforts of life. He brought them forth to spiritual freedom, to a state of personal liberation in which each individual would have unlimited opportunities to rise to the highest levels of spiritual achievement. He brought the Jewish people forth from Egypt so that they could connect with their Creator, so that the divine spark within each of them would flare into a splendid spiritual flame.

A bondsman, under constant obligation to his master, cannot undertake this spiritual journey. Therefore, if he chooses to remain, he is choosing the material over the spiritual, completely missing the message of the Exodus. In response, his ear is drilled, symbolizing the penetration beyond the superficial to the essence within. The bondsman must learn the deeper meaning of the Exodus and the role of "My servants." Being the servant of Hashem does not connote physical bondage but rather spiritual freedom. This is the essence of the Exodus.

A successful businessman met an old schoolmate in a train station. The man was gaunt and unshaven, and his clothing was threadbare. The small satchel in his hand obviously held all his earthly belongings. "What happened to you, my friend?" asked the businessman. "We all thought you were on the road to success."

"I have successfully found freedom. I am a travelling preacher." "Freedom? You call this freedom?". "Yes, I do," said the preacher. "Tell me, are you free?". "Me?" said the businessman. "Of course, I am free.". "You are mistaken," said the preacher. "You are a prisoner of your large house with its large mortgage, your business, your employees, your customers, your bills, your investments, everything. You cannot make a move without giving accountings in every direction. I, on the other hand, am free to do whatever my spirit moves me to do."

In our own lives, we all value and cherish the opportunities available to us in the democratic and affluent society in which we live. But let us not confuse material success with freedom. If the price of our material

success is the stultification of our spirits than we have only achieved a gilded bondage and cheated ourselves of the unlimited rewards which only true spiritual freedom so richly provides.

The Nose Knows

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

Distance yourself from a false matter... (Shemos 23:7)

In a Parsha packed with Mitzvos, this warning to distance one's self from falsehood is not one. If it is not a Commandment then what is it? Moshe is told to place the Mitzvos in front of the Jewish People like a Shulchan Aruch- like a set table. Moving away from false matters sounds more like advice on how to enjoy and savor every bite.

One of my colleagues intimated that it is a Mida- a character trait that requires refinement. How so? Every Mida is a necessary sensitivity for balancing our beings. The ability to detect truth and to distinguish true matters from false matters is vital for our survival and our personal development. A person lacking that discernment remains vulnerable to the techniques of the many outlets of misinformation, disinformation, and seductive salesmanship. The quest for truth is an essential ingredient of the soul. When that sense is overly dulled or frustrated the human personality adopts a posture of terminal cynicism. It doubts that truth exists. It assumes the meaning of life is subjective and truth – a pipe dream for philosophers or fools. It's no wonder then that TIME magazine's cover recently featured the title, "Is Truth Dead?"

Checking out at Walmart, a short while back, all I had to purchase was a blank notebook; a bound sketchpad without lines. I told the cashier half cynically as I thumbed through the empty pages I wanted to have in my possession a book that every word in it is true. This kindly elderly lady with her name, "June" on her badge, chimed in profoundly, "Well there's always the Torah, that's surely true!" I had to admit that I couldn't agree more but as I strolled out I continued to wonder how she knew it's all true. The answer is, the Talmud tells us, "Truth is recognizable!" We know from the depth of our beings when we are face to face with the authentic article.

In a Q&A session in Yeshiva more than 35 years ago a student posed the following difficulty he was confronting: "Before I became religious I was openly exposed to immorality and many images too. Yet I remained unaffected. Now that I became "religious" the slightest contact with these things immediately upsets my moral equilibrium. Maybe I was better and better off before I became religious."

The Rabbi answered with a story. It was something he had witnessed. He was walking through the streets of Jerusalem. A sewage pipe had broken and there was raw sewage all over. The stench was unbearable and he tried quickly to pass by and get away from the unpleasantness of the situation. I remember the look on his face as he was reliving this. It must have been really bad.

He said there was a group of men stationed there to clean up and repair the mess. He was amazed that they were able remain there and to work knee deep in sewage. It was so intolerable! As he was rushing past a siren sounded signaling break time and the crew immediately halted work and took out their lunch boxes and started to eat. He couldn't believe what he had just witnessed.

The Rabbi went on to explain that they had become so desensitized to the foulness of their surroundings, that they were able to remain totally oblivious to the stench. Their senses had become dulled to the point where they could sit and eat in that wretched place. Any other pedestrian like himself was disgusted to have to pass it by quickly and they could not get farther away more quickly.

So too when it comes to immorality! A person becomes desensitized to certain sights and scenes and after a while they are like wallpaper in his mind. He fails to feel. The terrible down side is that these senses are most useful and meaningful in building a family and creating a healthy marriage and that muted emotional response is a relationship killer. This dullness is the death of a vital organ.

We all naturally appreciate the sweet scent of truth and we are all naturally disgusted by the fowl odor of falsehood. "Distance yourself from falsehood" cautions that we remain sensitive to TRUTH. Overexposure to foolishness and falsehood makes us dull to the receptivity of even obvious TRUTH. The nose knows!